



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Overview

2-27-96

The Volunteer Services Program is a statewide system which facilitates CP&P's ability to meet the needs of clients and the community through citizen participation.

The program is designed to provide ancillary support to CP&P staff in order to enhance, expand, or reinforce the Division's social service delivery system.

This is accomplished through:

- identification of service needs/areas where volunteers can participate,
- assessment, orientation, training, placement, and supervision of volunteers,
- monitoring and evaluation of volunteer services for the purpose of program planning.

See [CP&P-IX-C-3-200](#), Student Intern Program, for volunteer policies related to student interns.

Definitions

2-27-96

A volunteer is a person who provides direct or indirect services, assistance, or goods without financial compensation. CP&P utilizes two categories of volunteers: regular volunteers and student interns.

Volunteers may be used to:

- develop a currently unavailable, yet needed community resource, e.g., community/county food bank or clothing bank; provide materials for such resources,
- develop/expand a group service or self-help group, e.g., Parents Anonymous,
- provide a direct service for particular clients or the LO e.g., transportation for medical appointments, parent/child visits, Parents

Anonymous participation; teaching budgeting, nutrition, food shopping and preparation; tutoring a child; clerical assistance, or

- conduct a special event or project.

Regular volunteers include:

- individuals,
- community groups, or
- public/private partnerships, which combine private sector personnel and/or financial contributions with public agency resources.
- foster grandparents.

A foster grandparent (FGP) is a person over the age of 60 hired through a community-based federally funded program (some programs which provide FGPs to CP&P have a lower age minimum) with a limited income who works directly with CP&P children and/or their families or provides indirect services. Some of the activities FGPs are involved in include: providing individual attention to children in our day care centers, helping young mothers to learn parenting skills and household management, assisting field staff in providing supervised visitation for families, as well as knitting hats, scarves, and mittens for CP&P children. Foster grandparents are placed with CP&P through community-based foster grandparent organizations such as Green Thumb and RSVP. In addition, the New Jersey Foster Grandparent Program, which receives federal funding through the Division of Developmental Disabilities, provides CP&P with FGP Volunteers. Persons placed through these programs receive a stipend.

Senior citizens who are not placed with CP&P through one of these special programs may volunteer their services to CP&P; however, they receive no stipend.

A student intern is a college student who requires field experience in a course which he is taking for credit toward a degree in social work or in a related field, e.g., psychology, sociology. The student intern provides many direct support services to field staff. These services range from assisting staff with case assessments, acting as buddies in a teamed response, supervising child/parent visitation, transportation, assuming direct responsibility for cases. See [CP&P-IX-C-3-200](#), Student Intern Program.

Development and Coordination of the Volunteer Program

Introduction

2-27-96

Development and coordination of the volunteer program is the responsibility of the Regional Coordinator of the volunteer program. A Regional Coordinator is designated in each area office, including the Central Office-based Office of Adoption Services and Support. Volunteers assigned to work in Central Office

are the responsibility of the Assistant Director (or his designee) responsible for the office/unit in which the volunteer is placed.

Regional Coordinator

2-27-96

The Regional Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the Volunteer Program in his or her region, and has primary responsibility for developing and maintaining the program and providing support to field offices to enable them to successfully utilize volunteers.

The responsibilities of the Regional Coordinator include:

- recruitment of volunteers,
- screening and approval of volunteers,
- overview of CP&P and general orientation.
- screening requests for volunteers from field offices/other units,
- matching volunteers with requests, and
- coordination with field offices/other units.

Volunteer Liaison

2-27-96

The Volunteer Liaison is the person designated in each office/unit who is responsible for coordinating volunteer activities between the area office and the office/unit. The Volunteer Liaison's responsibilities include:

- forwarding/directing inquiries from individuals/groups to the Regional Coordinator;
- soliciting/gathering requests for volunteers from staff and forwarding them to the Regional Coordinator, i.e., conducting office volunteer needs assessments;
- facilitating the matching of volunteers with offices/units;
- collecting assessments and timekeeping records, as required, from supervisors and forwarding to Regional Coordinator;
- keeping up to date on related policies;
- meeting regularly with supervisors having volunteers assigned to them to discuss the volunteer's progress, ability to carry out assigned tasks, etc.

It is the decision of the Office Manager/Designee whether it would be in the best

interests of the office for the Volunteer Liaison to assume responsibility for direct supervision of all volunteers or for individual unit supervisors to do so.

Whatever the decision, the following activities must also be conducted:

- conducting “local” orientation for volunteers;
- discussion of relevant CP&P mandates, policies, including its statutory authority, services, client population, community resources, specific office units and their functions;
- introductions to office staff (particularly key members of both professional and clerical units, and other student interns) and “tour” of office, including where volunteer’s desk is located, state car storage and use protocols, office supplies;
- where to find and how to use CP&P field operations manuals, and others as needed;
- choosing appropriate cases/projects for volunteers and discussing them with the volunteer and current Worker and/or supervisor;
- choosing appropriate assignments/projects for volunteers who are not placed in field offices or who will have no client contact;
- monitoring and meeting regularly with volunteers, and, as necessary, including Worker or other appropriate staff in meetings; and
- maintaining timekeeping records for volunteers and forwarding to Regional Coordinator.

Recruitment of Volunteers

2-27-96

To recruit volunteers, the Regional Coordinator:

- disseminates written information about volunteerism (e.g., pamphlets, posters, handouts) at community facilities (libraries, physicians’ offices, supermarkets);
- speaks to community groups (e.g., P.T.A.’s, Foster Grandparent Association, Lions and Rotary Clubs, senior citizen’s groups, clergy coalitions, religious and business organizations,) about the agency in general and the need for volunteers;
- arranges for publicity to recruit volunteers through press releases and radio announcements that are approved by the CP&P Community Education Office;
- attends and sets up displays at local fairs, career days, etc.; and

- suggests projects that a community organization can work on as a group.

Recruitment must be consistent with the Volunteer Service Program goal of accommodating genuine identified service needs.

Volunteer Standards and Application Process

Overview

2-27-96

The Regional Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all required steps in the application process are completed.

Volunteer applicants applying to provide direct services to clients and/or those who are applying to work in offices in which client information and/or records are handled are required to meet standards 1 through 9.

Student Intern volunteers must meet the standards in [CP&P-IX-C-3-200](#).

Standards and Application Process

4-1-2013

The following standards and application forms/reviews are required in order for a volunteer to be approved to provide services to CP&P or DCF:

1. Ability to provide service: The volunteer must be physically and emotionally able to provide services and must demonstrate a mature attitude toward both the work he is expected to do for CP&P and the purpose of CP&P as a child welfare agency. In addition, the volunteer must have three current personal references.
2. Criminal history clearance: The Department of Human Services requires volunteers to have criminal history checks which include state and federal screening. Volunteers shall not have any record of criminal child abuse/neglect/sexual abuse, or crimes of a violent or sexual nature. A volunteer shall not have any criminal record concerning the distribution or use of a controlled dangerous substance nature. A Live Scan fingerprint inquiry is necessary. Pursuant to Department of Human Services policy, it is required that "eye-contact" supervision of volunteers who work directly with clients be maintained until both State and Federal CHRI results are received. Eye-contact supervision will not be necessary after the State background check clearance is received and prior to receipt of Federal background check clearance when the volunteer will have no direct client contact.

Note: "Eye-contact" supervision means that a volunteer must have a CP&P staff member present whenever the volunteer is in personal contact with a client.

3. Local police check: A local police check in the municipality in which the applicant maintains his or her residence is required; CP&P Form [5-25](#), Police Check, is used.
4. CP&P Full Record Review (NJS inquiry), including Child Abuse

Records Information, CARI check: All volunteers must be cleared against New Jersey's Child Abuse Registry (see definition at [CP&P-IX-G-1-100](#)), including perpetrator listings. A volunteer who has been confirmed as a perpetrator of a Substantiated incident of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect shall not be approved regardless of the type of assignment requested.

- a. If, upon an NJS review, it is determined that an applicant is known to CP&P, and was responsible for an Established incident of child abuse or neglect (i.e., is an Established perpetrator of child abuse or neglect), the Volunteer Coordinator in the Area Office, or his or her designee, obtains the CP&P case record, reviews it, and makes the determination whether the applicant is suitable to serve as a volunteer to work with DCF children and families, or to perform administrative or other duties.
5. Supervision: The volunteer must be willing and able to accept supervision by CP&P staff. He or she must be available during regular working hours/days, unless there is agreement between all parties that it is necessary and appropriate for the volunteer to work after hours. Examples of after-hours work would be transportation, assisting supervised visitation of a parent and child, participation in a CP&P-run group activity for clients, or assistance to a Foster Care Specialist/Resource Family Support Worker in conducting new foster parent training.
6. Training: The volunteer must successfully complete orientation and initial training, as well as any other training which the supervising office deems necessary in order for the volunteer to carry out his responsibilities or enhance his performance as a volunteer.
7. Confidentiality: The volunteer must clearly be informed of and understand CP&P policy and statutory requirements to keep all information regarding CP&P clients and records confidential. He or she must sign the DCF Confidentiality Agreement (For Non-Employees), CP&P Form [8-80](#), acknowledging that he or she will maintain client confidentiality and not release client information as specified by N.J.S.A. (New Jersey Statutes Annotated) 30:4-24.3 and 9:6-8.10a, and Administrative Order 2:01.
8. Health: The volunteer must be in good health, free of debilitating or contagious disease or illness and, if in treatment for medical problems, be able to perform the work assigned to him by CP&P. A CP&P Form [5-2c](#), Medical Reference, must be completed by the volunteer's physician when there is reason to believe that the volunteer has a medical problem or condition which will interfere with responsibilities or cause a health risk to clients or others with whom the volunteer will have contact.
9. Valid Driver's License: Volunteers who will be using state vehicles to

carry out CP&P related business must have a driver's license which is valid in New Jersey.

- a. If the volunteer will be using his or her own car to conduct CP&P-related business, the volunteer must submit proof of personal auto insurance coverage.
- b. Persons who are only interested in providing goods or indirect services and who will have no contact with CP&P clients, records, or confidential information are not required to meet the above standards. CP&P staff responsible for making arrangements for the receipt of donated goods or scheduling/arranging for donated services shall ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Volunteer Application Process

2-27-96

The Regional Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the application and approval process for volunteer applicants.

Interview with Volunteer Applicant

11-19-2012

The application process includes conducting a personal interview with the applicant to discuss:

- why the applicant wants to become a volunteer,
- the type of volunteer service the applicant is willing and able to provide,
- the status of the applicant's physical and emotional health as it relates to the specific service to be provided,
- the applicant's interests and hobbies,
- the applicant's education and skills,
- the applicant's life experiences (employment, marriage/civil union partnership, divorced/dissolution of civil union partnership, parenting, household management, etc.),
- the applicant's description and perception of his/her family of origin,
- the applicant's social attitudes insofar as they might be a strength or a barrier to working with particular client populations, and
- whether the applicant identifies any personal experiences, characteristics, or problems that may be a barrier to his/her volunteer service,
- providing the applicant with required forms:

- Authorization for Release of Information, CP&P Form [26-15](#),
 - Police Check, CP&P Form [5-25](#),
 - DCF Confidentiality Agreement (For Non-Employees), CP&P Form [8-80](#),
 - Copy of valid Driver License to the Office of Facilities and Support Services (if applicable),
 - Copy of Auto Insurance Coverage Identification Card (if applicable),
- reviewing the forms as they are received,
 - documenting and tracking receipt of forms or other
 - information as they are received, and
 - documenting approval or disapproval of the applicant as a volunteer.

Assessment 2-27-96

The Regional Coordinator first records the facts and observations obtained through other phases of the application process then reviews the facts in terms of CP&P standards for volunteers. The Regional Coordinator makes an assessment which includes determining:

- whether the applicant meets CP&P standards,
- the specific service or types of services for which the applicant is qualified,
- whether there should be limitations on the types of assignments given.

Approval 2-27-96

The volunteer is approved or disapproved based on assessment of the personal interview and review of application materials, forms, and other information received.

The Regional Coordinator notifies the applicant whether he or she has been approved or not approved in a personal interview or telephone call whenever possible; the applicant is also notified in writing.

Information received which would have a negative impact on the applicant's ability to provide volunteer services or which may not meet agency standards is assessed before a final determination to approve or disapprove the applicant is made.

If the applicant is not approved, a brief written statement is required.

If the applicant is approved to provide volunteer services, make a recommendation suggesting the types of services/activities appropriate for

the volunteer.

Orientation

2-27-96

Orientation is conducted by the Regional Coordinator and is required for approved volunteers. It may be conducted on an individual or group basis but must consist of the following information:

- description of CP&P, including the reporting law, agency mandates and authorizations, SCR, services provided;
- brief definitions of abuse and neglect;
- discussion of worker safety issues as outlined in [CP&P-IX-A-1-100](#) for volunteers being considered to provide direct services;
- community resources, what they are and how used by CP&P;
- confidentiality of client information as required by law;
- CP&P administrative policies regarding volunteers, such as insurance, expense reimbursement, etc.
- the volunteer contract - purpose and components;
- importance of fulfilling the volunteer commitment.

Right to Appeal Non-Approvals and Terminations

2-27-96

Regular volunteers and student interns are not entitled to any rights of appeal if they are either not approved or are involuntarily terminated.

Foster grandparents who have been referred to CP&P through programs, such as Green Thumb, the New Jersey Foster Grandparents Program, which receive federal funding are entitled to certain appeal rights when they are either not approved or are involuntarily terminated. The reasons for this entitlement are the “due process” provisions which are incorporated in the law/regulations by the federal government in order for states to qualify for federal funding. The foster grandparent may appeal his or her termination through whichever program was responsible for hiring and placing the foster grandparent.

Volunteer Assignment and Supervision

Volunteer Assignment Process

2-27-96

Matching an Office/Unit Need to Volunteer’s Ability

4-1-2013

The Regional Coordinator maintains separate files for persons approved as:

- regular volunteers;
- foster grandparents, and

- student interns.

Within these categories, the Regional Coordinator develops and maintains a system for identifying the types of assignments the volunteer is willing and able to accept.

Upon receipt of a Request for Volunteer Service, the Regional Coordinator selects and contacts a volunteer who may be appropriate to provide the service and determines his or her availability and willingness to accept the assignment.

The Regional Coordinator and Volunteer Liaison/Designee work cooperatively to arrange for the volunteer to meet the client, staff, and/or other persons with whom the volunteer will work.

Only persons approved as Direct Service Volunteers may be given assignments involving work with clients or client records/information.

Whenever a volunteer or a member of his or her family is, or has been, known to the Division as either the subject of a child abuse/neglect investigation (whether Substantiated or not), or is named as a Substantiated perpetrator or an Established perpetrator, the Volunteer Liaison/Designee takes action to ensure that case records related to the incident(s) are placed in a secure location, e.g., LO Manager's office, locked file drawer. In addition, the volunteer should not have access to either an NJ SPIRIT terminal or any NJS information.

Alternatively, the volunteer can be stationed in an office other than that which was involved in the investigation.

Volunteer Assignments

2-27-96

The volunteer's assignment is documented in writing.

The volunteer agreement is developed as an outline of:

- task(s) to be performed,
- frequency of the task(s), e.g., days, hours,
- duration of the assignment,
- any prohibitions that are specific to the assignment,
- training (if any) required to be arranged for the specific assignment,
- record keeping required of the volunteer, e.g., Contact Sheets, CP&P Form [26-52](#),
- attendance requirements,
- contacts required (with whom, where, and how often), and
- who will be responsible for supervising the volunteers and how frequently they will meet.

The agreement is developed by the Volunteer Liaison with input from the volunteer. The volunteer and the Volunteer Liaison both sign and date the agreement.

Volunteers do not carry full responsibility for CP&P cases; that is, the assigned Worker retains overall responsibility for the case and the volunteer provides assistance. The type of assistance depends on whether the case is considered to be child protective services or child welfare. The assistance may include, but is not limited to:

- providing direct client services to an LO client;
- acting as buddies in teamed field responses;
- supervising parent/child visitations;
- providing transportation to clients;
- providing support to offices which conduct other client-related activities, e.g., Central Office Adoption Registry Unit, research;
- providing assistance to offices which provide other support to field offices, e.g., telecommunications, information systems and services.

Volunteer Supervision Process

Supervision 2-27-96

The Volunteer Liaison/Designee is responsible for supervising the activities of each volunteer. This includes:

- keeping attendance records,
- monitoring compliance with the Volunteer Assignment Plan, and
- evaluating the quality of the tasks performed by the volunteer.

The Volunteer Liaison/Designee holds conferences with the volunteer as stated in the Volunteer Assignment Plan, but remains accessible to consult with the volunteer at other times if needed.

Office/Unit Orientation

2-27-96

Orientation to the assigned office/unit is conducted by the Volunteer Liaison/Designee. It may be conducted on an individual or group basis but must include the following information:

- description of CP&P, including the reporting law, agency mandates and authorizations, SCR, services provided;

- discussion of conditions/actions which may constitute child abuse and neglect;
- confidentiality of client information as required by law;
- introduction to office staff;
- car assignment/schedule (if applicable);
- discussion of local resources;
- discussion of worker safety issues as outlined in [CP&P-IX-A-1-100](#) for volunteers being considered to provide direct services;
- CP&P administrative policies regarding volunteer, such as insurance, etc.;
- the volunteer contract - purpose and components;
- importance of fulfilling the volunteer commitment;
- CP&P standards as applicable to the type of volunteer.

Performance Evaluation

2-27-96

The Volunteer Liaison/Designee conducts an evaluation of the volunteer's performance at the mid-point of the volunteer's tenure with CP&P and again at the end of his or her tenure.

If it is expected that the volunteer will be working with CP&P on a long term basis, a brief evaluation is conducted every 6 months, with a longer in-depth evaluation conducted when the volunteer leaves the office/unit.

Mid-point, or interim, evaluations must note the time period covered and include brief assessments of the following:

- tasks and/or activities in which the volunteer was included;
- the volunteer's success (or lack of) in meeting CP&P expectations;
- problem areas, if any, and how they will be corrected or addressed;
- whether the volunteer should/should not continue to be utilized by the office/unit.

The mid-point evaluation is placed in the Volunteer Liaison's volunteer file.

A final evaluation of the volunteer's performance is conducted when the volunteer leaves the unit/office. It includes:

- the time frame which the evaluation covers;

- a brief overview of the kinds of tasks/activities in which the volunteer was involved;
- the volunteer's ability, or lack of, to meet the terms of his or her agreement with CP&P;
- reasons why the volunteer has left the office/unit;
- whether it is recommended that the volunteer be approved to provide services in the future. If the recommendation is that he or she not be approved, a clarifying statement must be included.

The final evaluation is placed in the Volunteer Liaison's volunteer file; a copy is forwarded to the Regional Coordinator for the regional volunteer file.

Termination

2-27-96

When the Regional Coordinator and/or Volunteer Liaison make a decision to terminate a volunteer's services, the Regional Coordinator and/or Volunteer Liaison meets with the volunteer and explains the reasons for the agency decision. After the meeting, a letter is sent to the volunteer clearly re-stating the reasons discussed at the meeting. Copies of the letter are placed in the Regional Coordinator's and Volunteer Liaison's files.